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On Campus with Max Shulman

(Author of "Rally Round the Flag, Boys!" and "Barefoot Boy With Cheek.")

A ROBE BY ANY OTHER NAME

With the Commencement Day just a couple of short months away, the question on everyone's lips is: "How did the different disciplines come to be marked by academic robes with hoods of different colors?" Everybody is asking it; I mean *everybody!* I mean I haven't been able to walk ten feet on any campus without somebody grabs my elbow and says, "How did the different disciplines come to be marked by academic robes with hoods of different colors, hey?"

This, I must say, is not the usual question asked by collegians who grab my elbow. Ordinarily they say, "Hey, Shorty, got a Marlboro?" And this is fitting. After all, are they not collegians and therefore loaded with brains? And does not intelligence demand the tastiest in tobacco flavor? And does not

Consumed with jealousy at the success of Mr. Sigafoos's library, Mr. Todhunter resolved to open a competing library. This he did, but he lured not one single patron away from Mr. Sigafoos. "What has Mr. Sigafoos got that I have not?" Mr. Todhunter kept asking himself, and finally the answer came to him: books.

So Mr. Todhunter stocked his library with lots of lovely books, and soon he was doing more business than his hated rival. But Mr. Sigafoos struck back. To regain his clientele, he began serving tea at his library every afternoon. Thereupon Mr. Todhunter, not to be outdone, began serving tea *with sugar*. Thereupon Mr. Sigafoos began serving tea with sugar

Marlboro deliver a flavor that is uniquely delicious? And am I not short?

But I digress. Back to the colored hoods of academic robes. A doctor of philosophy wears blue, a doctor of medicine wears green, a master of arts wears white, a doctor of humanities wears crimson, a master of library science wears lemon yellow. Why? Why, for example, should a master of library science wear lemon yellow?

Well sir, to answer this vexing question, we must go back to March 14, 1844. On that date the first public library in the United States was established by Ulrich Sigafoos. All of Mr. Sigafoos's neighbors were of course wildly grateful—all, that is, except Wrex Todhunter.

Mr. Todhunter had hated Mr. Sigafoos since 1822 when both men had wooed the beautiful Melanie Zitt and Melanie had chosen Mr. Sigafoos because she was mad for dancing and Mr. Sigafoos knew all the latest steps—like the Missouri Compromise Samba, the Shays' Rebellion Schottische, and the James K. Polk Polka—while Mr. Todhunter, alas, could not dance at all, owing to a wound he had received at the Battle of New Orleans. (He was struck by a falling praline.)

Why, Why?

and cream. Thereupon Mr. Todhunter began serving tea with sugar and cream *and lemon.*

This, of course, clinched the victory for Mr. Todhunter because he had the only lemon tree in town—in fact, in the entire state of Maine—and since that day lemon yellow has, of course, been the color on the robes of masters of library science.

(Incidentally, the defeated Mr. Sigafoos packed up his library and moved to California where, alas, he failed once more. There were, to be sure, plenty of lemons to serve with his tea, but, alas, there was no cream because the cow was not introduced to California until 1937 by John Wayne.)

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